



# Note to Correspondents

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## ADVISORY PANEL REPORT ASSESSES SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION CONCERNING STARLINK CORN

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Today, EPA made public a report from its Scientific Advisory Panel on the potential allergenicity of StarLink corn. EPA asked the expert panel to provide an independent scientific assessment on the potential allergenicity, sensitization and possible exposure to StarLink corn. StarLink presently is not licensed for use in food consumed by humans. Aventis, the manufacturer, has asked for a time-limited exemption to allow StarLink corn in food products, which EPA is currently reviewing.

“Both the Panel’s recommendations and the public comments that were submitted will be used to guide the EPA during the scientific evaluation of StarLink,” said Stephen Johnson, EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator. “EPA will continue its evaluation of the scientific information, and develop the appropriate regulatory approach in response to the StarLink situation to ensure protection of public health and continued consumer confidence in the safety and integrity of the food supply.”

EPA, the Food and Drug Administration, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture are working together closely on the StarLink situation, and have already begun to take the following steps recommended by the Panel to continue a thorough assessment:

- Follow-up investigation of incidents reported by individuals to evaluate whether StarLink residues may have caused allergic reactions.
- Evaluate new data to determine what extent processing has on StarLink protein residues in processed food.
- Review new and existing analytical methods for measuring levels of StarLink protein in processed foods.
- Continue focused monitoring of the food supply to determine whether residues of StarLink corn are present.

In summary, the Scientific Advisory Panel found, based on available information, that there is a “medium likelihood” that StarLink protein is a potential allergen and that given the low levels of StarLink in the U.S. diet, there is a “low probability” of allergenicity in the population exposed to the corn. While the Panel declined to speculate on the sensitization to StarLink, the Panel did note that children may be more sensitive than adults and study of infant diets should be given high priority. The Panel recommended as its highest priority that individuals who claim to have experienced adverse effects from StarLink corn consumption be studied as soon as possible to determine whether StarLink was the source of the reactions.

The Scientific Advisory Panel is an independent peer review body which provides scientific advice to EPA, with the members selected on the basis of their professional qualifications. The panel report is available at [www.epa.gov/scipoly/sap/](http://www.epa.gov/scipoly/sap/).